

Culebra Island Giant Anole

Anolis roosevelti



Family: Iguanidae
Order: Squamata

Description

The Culebra Island giant anole is similar in proportion to the Puerto Rican giant green anole (*Anolis cuvieri*), except that the head is more slender and pointed and the body is generally longer. The specimen collected in 1931 was grayish-brown, with two light-colored bands on each side of the body. This specimen also had a lighter colored spot on each side of the head, yellow eyelids, a yellowish-brown tail and a whitish ventral area.

Biological Information

Not much is known about this anole's habits. The specimen collected in 1931 was found in a forested area comprised of ficus and gumbo-limbo trees (*Bursera simaruba*). It is presumed that the anoles feed on fruits, insects, and other small lizards, as other anole species do.



Distribution

Reproduction

Nothing is known about this species' mating habits.

Distribution

The species is known to have inhabited Culebra Island, although many years ago, other specimens were collected in Vieques, Tortola Island (British Virgin Island) and St. John (United States Virgin Islands). The species is presumed extinct; no sightings have been reported since 1932. Areas in which this species can be found include areas near Mount Resaca, the Cerro Balcón neighborhood, and a small area northwest of Luis Peña Cay. Surveys performed by the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources of Puerto Rico in 1986 and 1987 failed to find any individuals of the species.

Threats

The deforestation of mature forest areas in Culebra is the leading cause for the apparent vanishing of this species. The increase in residential and touristic developments has significantly reduced the amount of habitat, as well. The species could also have been affected by depredation from exotic species such as feral cats.

Conservation Measures

The Culebra Island giant anole was included in the federal endangered species list in 1977. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service designated certain areas of mature forests in northern Culebra as critical habitats for the species.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits the killing, harassing, trapping, purchasing or selling any species, as well as parts and products derived from the species.

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